



**Training Partnerships for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness:
A Conference to Build Stronger Partnerships On Disaster Response Training**

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MEETING NOTES FROM DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY PLENARY

Thursday, April 22

Department of Homeland Security Plenary

Moderator: Chip Hughes

Chip Hughes began the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Plenary by introducing the panel members and stating the overall objective of the session. He noted that the plenary would address two important concepts: (1) how the new National Response Plan, National Incident Management System, and Incident Command System will deal with hazmat training; and (2) how the Office for Domestic Preparedness views the relationship between homeland security and hazmat training and preparedness.

Marco Bourne, Deputy Director of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), initiated his discussion with a background on FEMA. In March 2003, under the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate, FEMA was incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security. The agency is tasked with responding to, planning for, recovering from, and mitigating against disasters.

Next, Mr. Bourne spoke about the 2003 Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 that emphasizes the need to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive national incident management system (NIMS). The directive recognized the need for common terminology across all disaster incidents, regardless of size and location. DHS was commissioned to develop and administer the NIMS and the National Response Plan (NRP).

Mr. Bourne then differentiated between the NRP and NIMS. He described the NRP as the federal government's recipe book to emergency planning. It tells who does what and when and how. Mr. Bourne said NIMS, on the other hand, is the structure of the command and control system (not the plan) that allows state, local, and federal levels to operate. Its basic components include command and management, preparedness steps, resource management, communications and information management, supporting technologies, and ongoing management and maintenance. NIMS serves as a scaleable core set of doctrines, principles, concepts, and terminology. NRP and NIMS are related in the sense that they create an integrated federal, state, and local response plan that is scaleable and based on common standards and language.

Importantly, FY05 will be the first year that in order to receive federal preparedness assistance funding, state and local level agencies must adopt NIMS. These same parties will be involved in discussions with the Office for Domestic Preparedness to ensure compliance and that all entities understand what NIMS entails. Mr. Bourne's presentation will be available on the FEMA website in the upcoming weeks. To view the NIMS awareness web-based course offered through FEMA, please visit www.training.fema.gov/.

The next presenter was Darrell Darnell, Division Director of Local Programs for Domestic Preparedness in the Department of Homeland Security. He spoke about the history of the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), now referred to as the Office for State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness. Mr. Darnell then explained the expanded responsibilities of the Office and offered an overview on ODP training, support, courses, and resources, amongst other topics.

Specifically, he discussed how in April 1998, ODP was established through the Department of Justice to improve state and local WMD incident response capabilities nationwide. In March 2003, ODP was transitioned to DHS and its mission expanded to incorporate the national strategy into planning guidance, support risk analysis, coordinate preparedness efforts, provide training, and other tasks. More so, Mr. Darnell discussed ODP's Training and Technical Assistance Division (TTAD), which provides comprehensive training to prevent, deter, respond to, and recover from threats and incidents of terrorism. ODP provides funding for such programs through formula grants to institutionalize terrorism training at the state and local levels. With the help of partners such as the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, TTAD trains emergency responders nationwide in over forty courses.

ODP Training courses cover three levels of training ranging from awareness, operations and technician performance, and planning and management. These courses are administered via mobile, residential, and distance learning mechanisms and incorporate a comprehensive development and evaluation process based on instructional systems design, gap/needs assessment, pilot courses, subject matter expert and inter-agency review. For more information on training resources, Mr. Darnell directed the audience to call (800) 368-6498 or to visit www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp.

The third presenter, A.D Vickery, Deputy Chief for Homeland Security of the Seattle Fire Department, spoke about the First Response and the Skilled Trades (FIRST) program. Mr. Vickery explained that FIRST is set up to ensure the safe and successful coordination of emergency services and the skilled trade. Those involved with the Program strive to meet this mission by supporting two core objectives: (1) improving the safety and effectiveness of specific trained assets from labor and industry; and (2) developing a strategic plan to formalize the integration of resources.

He also mentioned that in November 2003, the FIRST Program Stakeholder Summit was held and several operational and training recommendations were agreed upon. Operational recommendations included integrating the skilled trade community into local, state, regional, and national response plans and exercises; establishing procedures for skilled trades notification, activation, and involvement; developing a set of coordinated safety operating rules; identifying local 'construction liaison superintendents' and integrating them into command staff; collaborating with local emergency planning committees; formalizing coordination between construction liaison superintendents and safety officers in the fire service; developing MOUs between the construction industry, skilled trades, and the emergency response agencies; and sustaining existing employee-employer relationships for the skilled trades.

Mr. Vickery continued with a discussion of some of the training program recommendations. These included providing training in four content areas such as hazard recognition, decontamination, incident command, and personal protective equipment; issuing identification/skill cards that verify completion of training; and ensuring that continuing education credentials are current. He concluded his presentation by restating the importance of first responders and skilled trades working together.

The final presenter, Chuck Soros, Chief of Special Operations of the Fire Department Safety Officers Association, further discussed the Seattle experience and the vision for first responders and skilled trades to work together to prevent chaos and minimize risks at disaster sites. To reach this vision, Mr. Soros explained that planners needed to find a focal point that could be used to increase emergency response awareness – and the strategy to do so was through collaboration with the Seattle Associated General Contractors (AGC).

This collaboration helped to advance two goals: meeting emergency response planning objectives and establishing an emergency incident response process. The first goal, meeting planning objectives, includes using incident command systems (ICS) effectively, incorporating training modules, establishing liaisons with superintendents, addressing credentialing needs, and identifying minimally acceptable training. The second goal, establishing a planning approach, determines the main concerns of a terrorist incident, who is responsible for what, who is needed to help, and how to get the resources to do the aforementioned.

Focusing on the first 24-36 hours of an incident, seventeen training modules were agreed upon and developed for the construction trade. These module topics included SCBA, first aid, blood borne pathogens, fire behavior, trench rescue, personal protective equipment, confined space, hazardous materials, asbestos warning, and fall protection. Furthermore, module requirements should include prerequisite courses, general knowledge, site operational knowledge, and experience working in the hazard zone. Mr. Soros emphasized that from this, basic skilled support personnel training programs should be developed and supported to help prevent chaos and minimize risks at disaster sites.

Following the plenary, were questions from the audience. Some participants asked for more information on credentialing, the NIMS framework, workers compensation, and how unified command is being incorporated into recent decisions. Others asked specific questions regarding training for public work employees, ERTs in the building trade, transportation workers, and community residents.